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BIRTH STATISTICS AND INFANT MORTALITY.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS FOR 1917.

In the birth-registration area of the United States 1,353,792 infants were born alive in 1917, representing a birth rate of 24.6 per 1,000 of population. The total number of deaths in the same area was 776,222, or 14.1 per 1,000. The births exceeded the deaths by 74.4 per cent. For every State in the registration area, for practically all the cities, and for nearly all the counties, the births exceeded the deaths, in most cases by considerable proportions. The mortality rate for infants under 1 year of age averaged 93.8 per 1,000 living births.

The birth-registration area, established in 1915, has grown rapidly. It comprised, in 1917, the six New England States, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, and had an estimated population of 55,000,000, or about 53 per cent of the estimated total population of the United States in that year.

Comparison with 1916.

The birth rate for the entire birth-registration area fell below that for 1916 by two-tenths of 1 per 1,000 population; but the death rate was less by six-tenths of 1 per 1,000 than in 1916. Thus, the excess of the birth rate over the death rate for 1917, which amounted to 10.5 per 1,000, was somewhat greater than the corresponding excess for 1916, 10.1 per 1,000, although it fell slightly below that for 1915, 10.9 per 1,000. If the birth and death rates prevailing in any one of these three years were to remain unchanged, and if no migration were to take place to or from the area to which they relate, the population of the area would increase at the rate of slightly more than 1 per cent per annum, or a little more than 10 per cent in a decade. This would be about half the rate—21 per cent—by which the entire population of the United States increased between 1900 and 1910.

White and colored.

Of the total number of births reported, 1,280,288, or 24.5 per 1,000, were of white infants, and 73,504, or 25.8 per 1,000, were of colored infants. The death rates for the two elements of the population were 13.7 and 22.5 per 1,000, respectively.

Infant mortality.

The infant mortality rate—that is, the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 born alive—throughout the birth-registration area as a whole was 93.8 in 1917, as against 101 in 1916 and 100 in 1915. This is equivalent to saying that in 1915 and 1916 of every 10 infants born alive 1 died before reaching the age of 1 year,

whereas in 1917 the corresponding ratio was a trifle more than 1 in 11. Among the 20 States these rates ranged from 67.4 for Minnesota to 119.9 for Maryland; and for the white population separately the lowest and the highest rates were, respectively, 66.3 for Washington and 109.5 for New Hampshire.

The infant mortality rates vary greatly for the two sexes and for the various nationalities. The rate for male infants in 1917, 103.7 per 1,000 living births, was nearly 25 per cent greater than that for female infants, which was only 83.3. When the comparison is made on the basis of race or nationality of mother a minimum of 66.2 per 1,000 births is shown for infants with mothers born in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and a maximum of 172.6 for infants with mothers born in Poland, while for Negro children the rate was 148.6.

Plural births.

The reports from the registration area show the birth of 14,394 pairs of twins and 155 sets of triplets in 1917—in all, 29,253 infants, or a little more than 2 per cent of the total number born.

Number of children per family.

The reports for 1,241,722 of the births occurring in 1917 contained information as to number of child in order of birth. Of these reports, 339,042 were for the first child born to the mother, 264,044 for the second child, 191,528 for the third, 134,331 for the fourth, and 95,931 for the fifth. In the remaining 216,846 cases, or 17.5 per cent of the entire number for which information upon this point was obtained, the total number of children borne by the mother was 6 or more; in 37,914 cases it was 10 or more; in 1,600 cases, 15 or more; in 56 cases, 20 or more; and in 1 case, that of a colored woman, the birth of a twenty-fifth child was reported.

The total number of children borne by the mothers who gave birth to these 1,241,722 infants in 1917, in whose cases data were available as to previous births, was 4,093,908. The reports for 1,194,621 of the births occurring in 1917 contained information as to the entire number of children borne by the mothers and still living, and gave a total of 3,443,466, or an average of very nearly 3 living children in each family in which a birth took place in 1917.

States and cities.

The following table shows, for the birth-registration area, by States and by cities having more than 100,000 population in 1910, the number of births in 1917, the percentage of excess of births over deaths, and the infant mortality rate. The figures for the white and colored elements of the population are shown separately for those areas in which colored persons constituted more than one-tenth of the total population.

Births, excess of births over deaths, and infant mortality, 1917.

Area.	Number of births.	Excess of births over deaths.	Deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births.
		<i>Per cent.</i>	
Registration area, total.....	1,353,792	74.4	93.8
White.....	1,280,288	79.8	90.5
Colored.....	73,504	14.9	150.7
<i>Registration States.</i>			
Connecticut.....	37,481	80.0	93.8
Indiana.....	63,144	58.9	85.8
Kansas.....	38,601	87.0	77.5
Kentucky.....	61,698	88.5	87.1
Maine.....	16,651	42.7	93.3
Maryland.....	33,963	44.9	119.9
White.....	27,519	60.1	100.9
Colored.....	6,444	3.1	201.0
Massachusetts.....	95,673	68.8	97.9
Michigan.....	89,159	89.2	88.3
Minnesota.....	54,795	129.1	67.4
New Hampshire.....	9,569	28.3	109.6
New York.....	246,019	59.8	91.4
North Carolina.....	76,290	124.6	99.6
White.....	52,830	158.2	84.8
Colored.....	23,460	73.6	133.1
Ohio.....	120,949	57.2	92.1
Pennsylvania.....	222,505	73.6	111.0
Rhode Island.....	15,285	60.7	107.5
Utah.....	13,630	195.3	69.4
Vermont.....	7,553	38.1	85.0
Virginia.....	60,753	92.7	97.8
White.....	41,924	132.7	80.4
Colored.....	18,829	39.4	136.5
Washington.....	23,464	93.3	69.3
Wisconsin.....	59,124	103.0	77.8
<i>Registration cities having more than 100,000 inhabitants in 1910.</i>			
Connecticut:			
Bridgeport.....	5,109	125.1	87.1
New Haven.....	5,181	98.3	83.7
District of Columbia:			
Washington.....	7,485	13.3	97.4
White.....	5,250	31.7	70.9
Colored.....	2,235	14.7	159.7
Indiana:			
Indianapolis.....	5,955	30.0	95.2
Kentucky:			
Louisville.....	4,112	4.9	96.5
White.....	3,593	25.9	83.6
Colored.....	519	51.3	165.7
Maryland:			
Baltimore.....	15,040	32.5	118.4
White.....	12,645	51.2	103.4
Colored.....	2,395	20.0	197.1
Massachusetts:			
Boston.....	19,877	56.5	99.1
Cambridge.....	2,783	72.1	74.6
Fall River.....	3,807	79.9	153.9
Lowell.....	3,289	69.5	140.2
Worcester.....	5,280	89.3	94.9
Michigan:			
Detroit.....	26,298	124.1	103.2
Grand Rapids.....	3,051	75.5	82.6
Minnesota:			
Minneapolis.....	8,675	96.6	71.5
St. Paul.....	5,151	89.1	73.6
New York:			
Albany.....	2,259	10.8	108.9
Buffalo.....	13,487	76.3	104.0
New York.....	141,234	79.9	89.0
Rochester.....	6,938	69.9	84.2
Syracuse.....	4,199	73.1	102.4
Ohio:			
Cincinnati.....	7,817	14.5	88.0
Cleveland.....	20,274	87.2	108.9
Columbus.....	4,398	30.0	87.8
Dayton.....	3,311	61.1	96.0
Toledo.....	5,684	59.4	95.4

¹ Percentage by which births fell below deaths.

Births, excess of births over deaths, and infant mortality, 1917—Continued.

Area.	Number of births.	Excess of births over deaths.	Deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births.
Pennsylvania:		<i>Per cent.</i>	
Philadelphia.....	42,788	44.3	108.4
Pittsburgh.....	16,543	55.4	119.9
Seranton.....	3,298	46.8	147.7
Rhode Island:			
Providence.....	6,395	60.0	101.6
Virginia:			
Richmond.....	3,790	29.3	136.1
White.....	2,500	59.6	93.6
Colored.....	1,290	¹ -5.6	218.6
Washington:			
Seattle.....	4,876	92.7	60.5
Spokane.....	2,104	81.1	62.3
Wisconsin:			
Milwaukee.....	11,289	106.7	93.7

¹ Percentage by which births fell below deaths.

SALE OF INFECTED MEAT CAUSING TRICHINOSIS.**PENNSYLVANIA COURT HOLDS THAT DEALER IS NOT LIABLE WHERE NEGLIGENCE IS NOT SHOWN.**

That a dealer is not liable for selling meat infected with trichinæ, and which caused illness, when there was no negligence in such sale, is the decision in a Pennsylvania case.¹

In an action to recover damages for illness resulting from eating pork infected with trichinæ, the defendant offered evidence showing that "parasites, known as trichinæ, are invisible to the naked eye and can be discovered only by microscopic inspection; that such inspection is untrustworthy and does not in all cases give assurance that the particular meat inspected and approved is free from parasites; that no system of inspection is known to science by which the presence of trichinæ can be detected with certainty in all cases; and that the only sure method of eliminating the danger is to thoroughly cook the meat at a temperature of at least 140°, whereby the harmful parasites are destroyed and the meat rendered wholesome and fit for food." Defendant also showed that "for the reasons above stated, the United States Government concluded an attempt to inspect all pork for trichinæ would result in more danger to the public than no inspection, for the reason [that] knowledge on the part of the public that an inspection had been made would lead to a false sense of security and induce consumers to omit taking proper precautions to avoid danger by thoroughly cooking."

It was shown, too, that other packing establishments made no inspection for trichinæ.

The court held that there had been no negligence on the part of the dealer.

¹ Tavani v. Swift & Co., 105 Atl., 55.